

## AN INTERACTIVE, MULTI-USER MEDIA DELIVERY SYSTEM

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

#### Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to an interactive multi-user media delivery system which can be effectively employed with any conventional media type disposed on a corresponding storage medium, so as to provide substantially enhanced receipt of the media content and multi-user interactivity between one or more simultaneous recipients of the media selection. The present interactive multi-user media delivery system does not require any special programming and/or authorization on the storage medium and the media selection contained thereon, but rather operates to effectively allow an interactive multi-user viewing experience that can be managed directly and independently by individual users, and/or managed by a remote organizational concern such as a teacher, meeting organizer, movie studio, production company, advertiser, sponsor, etc.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

In entertainment and information related industries, informational and/or entertainment media are provided to users in a variety of conventional and advancing formats. Despite the availability of various types of media content utilizing transmission networks, such as broadcast, cable, satellite,

1 fiber optic, Internet, etc., due to convenience, file size  
2 and/or copyright issues, a still very popular form for the  
3 delivery of media to a user is through the use of portable  
4 storage mediums that can be easily transported, owned by an  
5 individual, shared, rented, and/or mass produced for  
6 distribution and/or sale to a large number of users.

7 These various types of distributable media may include  
8 audio only media, such as on CD ROMS, conventional CDs, cassette  
9 tapes, floppy discs, digital storage chips, portable devices,  
10 and/or other storage devices, or can include audio-visual media,  
11 storable on similar types of portable storage medium as well as  
12 video cassettes, DVD's, video CD's and chipped based digital  
13 storage devices. Furthermore, each individual storage medium  
14 may include one or more particular media selection which are to  
15 be made available to the users utilizing a conventional play  
16 back device. As can be appreciated, the sale, rental and/or  
17 promotional distribution of content utilizing such portable  
18 storage medium is a very significant aspect of commerce.

19 Despite the benefits of being able to receive and enjoy  
20 media content independently, such as in a user's own home, one  
21 draw back associated with the utilization of a compact portable  
22 storage medium, may be the diminishment of group interaction  
23 and/or utilization of the media content. For example, in the  
24 entertainment industry it is widely recognized that when a group  
25 is able to view programming, such as a particular motion

1 picture, together as a group, the viewing experience is often  
2 enhanced as the group may "feed off of one another" in  
3 responding to the media content. As a result, as technology  
4 changes and advances, and the sale and/or rental for home use of  
5 media content, such as motion pictures becomes an ever  
6 increasing and important part of the entertainment industry,  
7 this group interaction is sacrificed. Accordingly, there is a  
8 substantial need in the art for a media delivery system which  
9 will not interfere with a user's normal utilization and access  
10 to varying types of media content, but which will also allow a  
11 number of users to have an interactive and common media  
12 experience, whether it is independently initiated by users or  
13 sponsored by an interested party. Furthermore, such a system  
14 should permit uniform simultaneous viewing and control of any  
15 conventionally available, and/or to be developed media type and  
16 medium storage and play back system. For example, it is  
17 recognized, that a very large number of storage mediums have  
18 already been sold and/or distributed, and as such, the system  
19 should allow effective interaction and multi-user experiences  
20 with the conventionally programmed and/or configured storage  
21 mediums as well.

22 In addition to a large scale, multi-user viewing  
23 experience, it would also be beneficial to provide an easy to  
24 implement multi-user system so that as little as two users can  
25 enjoy a common media experience. AS can be appreciated, such a

1 system would have a number of beneficial uses, including use by  
2 distant relatives to view home movies or a special movie  
3 selection together, or by friends and neighbors to have an  
4 interactive, group viewing experience without having to leave  
5 their homes. Moreover, such a system should preferably do more  
6 than merely allow simultaneous viewing, but should also allow  
7 interaction between the various users at remote locations.

8 In addition to the entertainment applications, it would  
9 also be beneficial to provide an interactive multi-user media  
10 delivery system which can be effectively utilized as an  
11 informational tool, whether in business or in the education  
12 industry. Specifically, it would be advantageous to provide a  
13 controllable information dissemination experience to any number  
14 of users and/or a number of locations without requiring special  
15 programming or encoding in the information itself. As a result,  
16 a large number of users can truly experience a simultaneous and  
17 interactive distribution of the information, be it a  
18 presentation, instructional materials, etc. Further, such a  
19 system should also provide a degree of interactivity between the  
20 varied users so as to eliminate the disadvantages of the  
21 isolating viewing scenario that must currently be experienced by  
22 viewers at different remote locations.

#### 23 24 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

25 The present invention relates to an interactive multi user

1 media delivery system. The media delivery system preferably  
2 includes at least two media storage mediums, each of which may  
3 contain at least a particular media selection. Furthermore, at  
4 least two media players capable of receiving and effectively  
5 delivering the media selection to a user from the storage  
6 mediums are also provided. Naturally, the delivery mode of the  
7 media may correspond to the type of media being delivered, such  
8 as using a video monitor for video and/or audio-video media,  
9 and/or speakers. Moreover, each of the media players includes a  
10 control assembly that selectively controls and regulates the  
11 delivery of the media selection to the user in a conventional  
12 manner, such as via the video monitor and/or audio monitor.

13 Within the context of the present media delivery system, at  
14 least one of the media players is preferable designatable as a  
15 slave a unit. Moreover, a master control assembly is further  
16 provided, and is operatively associated with the media players,  
17 and at least the slave media players, so as to effectively  
18 regulate and/or control the delivery of the media selection by  
19 each slave media player. The master control assembly may be  
20 configured to provide control inputs similar to those of the  
21 control assembly of the media players, and/or may provide  
22 additional control functions.

23 The master control assembly is preferably communicatively  
24 associated with at least the slave unit(s) via a connectivity  
25 assembly. Specifically, the connectivity assembly is structured

1 to establish a communicative link at least between the slave  
2 unit(s) and the master control assembly for a preferred,  
3 although not required, two way transmission of information.  
4 Additionally, the master control assembly may be structured to  
5 receive synchronization data from each of the media players,  
6 such as by the connectivity assembly, and to accordingly  
7 simultaneously and uniformly control delivery of the media  
8 selection by the media players. Indeed, this simultaneous and  
9 uniform delivery of the media selection is achieved without  
10 requiring any specialized and/or specific programming on the  
11 media storage medium.

12 These and other features and advantages of the present  
13 invention will become more clear when the drawings as well as  
14 the detailed description are taken into consideration.

15  
16 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

17 For a fuller understanding of the nature of the present  
18 invention, reference should be had to the following detailed  
19 description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings  
20 in which:

21 Figure 1 is a schematic representation of one embodiment of  
22 the interactive, multi-user media delivery system of the present  
23 invention;

24 Figure 2 is a schematic illustration of another embodiment  
25 of the interactive, multi-user media delivery system of the

1 present invention;

2 Figure 3 is an illustration of one monitor assembly  
3 utilized in conjunction with a media player of the delivery  
4 system of the present invention, the monitor, including one  
5 embodiment of the messaging display of the communication shell;

6 Figure 4 is an illustration of an alternative embodiment of  
7 the messaging display of the communication shell; and

8 Figure 5 is a schematic representation of an embodiment of  
9 the enhanced media player of the present invention.

10 Like reference numerals refer to like parts throughout the  
11 several views of the drawings.

12  
13 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

14 The present invention is directed towards an interactive,  
15 multi user, media delivery system, generally indicating as 10,  
16 and more specifically with a media player 15 configured for  
17 integration within the media delivery system 10 of the present  
18 invention. In particular, the media delivery system 10 of the  
19 present includes at least two but preferably a plurality of  
20 media players 15, 15'. The media players 15, 15' may be  
21 maintained and operated by users in a variety of locations which  
22 may be local or remote from one another. Furthermore, each of  
23 the media players 15, 15' is preferably configured to deliver  
24 a media selection to a user from a media storage medium 12 to be  
25 associated therewith. Specifically, the media players 15, 15'

are preferably structured to deliver a media selection to a user, and may be structured to deliver any of a number conventionally available media types and formats. As such, the media players 15, 15' of the present invention may include an input assembly 17 to receive the storage medium 12 and a delivery assembly 23 that includes a media decoder 24 to deliver the corresponding type of media selection from the storage medium and a control assembly 20 which controls the delivery of the media selection as facilitated by an output assembly 19. Accordingly the delivery assembly may include or integrate video tape play back units, DVD play back systems, compact disk or digital music playback systems, such as MP3 players, video CD play back systems and/or digital memory stick, hard disk storage systems, personal (digital) video recorders or chip based play back systems. Further, the media players may be multi-media capable, such as in the form of a personal computer with media capabilities, combined DVD/MP3/Video CD player, etc. To this end, it is also recognized that although not necessary, it may be preferred that the media players be associated with digital media contained on media storage mediums 12 to be associated therewith. Further, each media player 15, 15' should have their own media storage medium 12 containing a corresponding media selection for playback, thus promoting the protection of copyright laws and requiring each user purchase or rent their own lawful copy. Moreover, it may also be seen that



1 utilizing the system of the present invention, as will be  
2 described, an identifier for each media selection may also be  
3 communicated to a central authority so as to verify that an  
4 unauthorized copy is not being used. As such, users have  
5 incentive to purchase or obtain authorized copies of a media  
6 selection if they which to participate in the interactive  
7 experience available utilizing the present invention.  
8 Furthermore, although any desired type of encoding and/or  
9 programming may be made directly on the storage medium 12 or  
10 within the media selection, the storage mediums 12 may be  
11 structured in any conventional fashion useable on any  
12 corresponding device and do not require specialize encoding  
13 other than that normally required to achieve conventional  
14 utilization. Also, although not required, it is preferred that  
15 each storage medium 12 preferably includes a substantially  
16 identical or uniform copy of a particular media selection to be  
17 delivered utilizing the present system. Still, however, the  
18 media players 15, 15' need not be dedicated exclusively for the  
19 multi-user media delivery system 10 of the present invention,  
20 but rather they may also be configured for independent,  
21 relatively conventional utilization.

22 Each of the media players 15, 15' preferably includes a  
23 control assembly 20, 20'. The control assembly 20, 20' is  
24 incorporated so as to effectively regulate and control the  
25 delivery of the media selection to the user, such as via an

1 associated monitor 16 for the purposes of an audio-video medium,  
2 or merely by way of an audio monitor in the case of a purely  
3 audio media selection. Along these lines, the control assembly  
4 may include such features as play, pause, rewind, fast forward  
5 and/or any other appropriate and/or desirable control functions  
6 which can effectively allow a user to regulate the delivery of  
7 the media selection or access other components or aspects of a  
8 media selection, as in the case of a DVD or CD.

9 The multi user media delivery system 10 of the present  
10 invention further includes a master control assembly. The  
11 master control assembly is structured to substantially  
12 simultaneously and uniformly control the delivery of the media  
13 selection by at least certain ones of the media players 15, 15'  
14 that are to be associated with the delivery of a specific media  
15 selection. To this end, the media selection is provided to a  
16 corresponding user of each active media player 15, 15' in a  
17 substantially synchronized, simultaneous and uniform fashion.  
18 As a result, a uniform, and collective viewing experience can be  
19 achieved for all of the users. Examples of the application of  
20 the multi user media delivery system 10 of the present invention  
21 will be described in greater detailed subsequently.

22 Looking first to the embodiment of Figure 1, in one  
23 embodiment of the media delivery system 10 of the present  
24 invention one or a plurality of media players 15 are preferably  
25 designated, preferably selectively and/or temporarily, as slave

1 unit(s). That is, the slave unit(s) are configured to be  
2 operated and/or controlled by the master control assembly at  
3 least with regard to media delivery. Likewise, in the  
4 embodiment of Figure 1, any or one of the media players 15' may  
5 be designated as a master unit, its control assembly 20'  
6 functioning at least partially as the master control assembly  
7 which regulates and controls the delivery of the media by at  
8 least the slave media players 15 but preferably slave media  
9 players 15 as well as the corresponding master player 15'. In  
10 this regard, it is recognized that at least one slave media  
11 player 15 is designated, however, a virtually unlimited number  
12 of slave media players 15 may equivalently be provided and  
13 integrated within the media delivery system 10 of the present  
14 invention. Likewise, it is recognized that a large number of  
15 media players 15 may be available for designation as slave media  
16 players for a particular uniform viewing utilizing the media  
17 delivery system 10, however, not all may elect to participate  
18 and/or may be designated as slave media players 15 to be  
19 controlled by the master control assembly. Also, is recognized  
20 that although one media player 15' is preferably designated to  
21 define the master control assembly 20', designation as the  
22 master control assembly 20' may be shared by one or more media  
23 players, including the slave media players themselves, and/or  
24 may be switched or moved from one media player to another. As a  
25 result, independent users can organize and initiate a

1 simultaneous delivery experience and can selectively share  
2 and/or give up control over the delivery. For example, any user  
3 or all users may be given master control assembly functionality  
4 to pause, rewind, stop, etc., a media delivery for some media  
5 players or all participating media players.

6 Turning to Figure 2, in an alternative embodiment of the  
7 present invention an independent remote computer processor 18,  
8 which may be or may not be associated with a media player at  
9 all, may exclusively or in a shared manner include the master  
10 control assembly 22. In this embodiment, it is at least the  
11 remote computer processor 18 which directs the operation of all  
12 slave media player 15. Also, in this embodiment a particular  
13 user may elect to designate their media player as a slave media  
14 player 15, or may elect to retain control and not participate in  
15 a simultaneous media delivery. Furthermore, as mentioned, the  
16 individual slave media players 15 may also retain a certain  
17 degree of control over themselves, and/or may be allowed to act  
18 either temporarily or perpetually as the master control assembly  
19 either instead of or in addition to the master control assembly  
20 22 of the remote computer processor 18.

21 From the proceeding, it is seen that the multi user media  
22 delivery system 10 of the present invention, either in the  
23 embodiment of Figure 1 or Figure 2 has a variety of uses and  
24 applications which will substantially enhance the delivery of  
25 media content by a media player of the present invention. One

1 example of such a use of the multi user media delivery system 10  
2 of the present invention may be for a specific motion picture  
3 and/or other audio video media premier on a portable storage  
4 medium 12 such as a DVD. In such a circumstance, users who are  
5 to participate in a simultaneous viewing of the DVD will have  
6 their own particular DVD as the storage medium 12 to be inserted  
7 at an appropriate time into their media player 15, 15' for  
8 effective viewing. At that point in time, producers,  
9 distributors, talent, etc. of the DVD utilizing the remote  
10 computer processor 18 as the master control assembly 22 and/or  
11 the utilization of a master player 15' are able to control and  
12 regulate a simultaneous viewing of the media selection by a  
13 large audience for a synchronize premier. Indeed, it is also  
14 recognized within such an application, a specially programmed  
15 DVD, such as provided within the system of U.S. Patent No.  
16 6,101,534, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by  
17 reference, may be provided such that the master control assembly  
18 can actually unlock content previously not available to the user  
19 conventionally by the media player. As a result, a controlled  
20 premier can be maintained with each individual user not being  
21 able to actually view the media selection in its entirety or at  
22 all unless unlocked as part of the uniform delivery. Similarly,  
23 additional enhanced content may be provided to the user so as to  
24 further enhance the delivery of the media selection, such as a  
25 directors cut, special features, etc. Of course, it is

1 understood that the entertainment industry is not the only  
2 industry which could benefit from the multi user media delivery  
3 system 10 of the present invention. Alternatively, in the  
4 business and educational field, corresponding storage medium 12  
5 can be delivered to one or a plurality of users, such as  
6 students or participants in a meeting at different offices, for  
7 placement into their media players 15, 15'. Utilizing the master  
8 control assembly 20', 22' a meeting organizer, and/or any user  
9 as desired by the meeting organizer, may effectively control the  
10 simultaneous delivery of the media selection, which can be a  
11 presentation, proposal, meeting notes, educational materials,  
12 etc. Further, as will be described subsequently, the  
13 communicative interactivity which is also preferably provided as  
14 part of the media delivery system 10 of the present invention  
15 provides a further enhanced degree of interactivity more than  
16 mere simultaneous receipt of the media selection.

17 In order to effectively achieve interactivity and  
18 communication between each of the various media players 15, 15'  
19 and/or a remote computer processor 18, each of the media players  
20 further preferably includes a connectivity assembly 30. The  
21 connectivity assembly 30 is configured so as to effectively  
22 provide communication between the media players 15, 15' and/or  
23 the remote computer processor 18, and as such may include a  
24 computer control assembly, such as utilizing a computer network  
25 15 including the internet. In this regard, the connectivity

assembly may be a specific dedicated connectivity assembly by which all media players 15, 15' and/or the remote computer processor assembly 18 can communicate in a dedicated fashion, and/or may include any conventional type of Internet access or public connection which allows for effective data transmission and input receipts to and from the media players 15, 15'. As such, a web enable media player 15, 15' may be integrated into the present system so as to provide the connectivity assembly 30 desired. Also in some embodiments, a central server 52 may also be provided and/or maintained so as to achieve appropriate management of the communication between the respective media players 15, 15' and/or remote computer processor 18. In this regard, the central server 52, utilizing for example a computer network 50, is able to regulate traffic to and from the individual media players 15, 15', and as will be described subsequently, may also regulate and/or control messaging and/or promotional activity to be associated with the delivery of the media selection.

Looking in further detail to the central server assembly 52, it is preferably structured to receive communicative inputs from media players 15, 15' and/or a remote computer processor 18, and to effectively communicate them in an understandable fashion to all of the media players and/or remote computer processor 18. Indeed in this regard, the central server assembly 52 may include the remote computer processor 18 that

1 includes the master control assembly. Additionally, however,  
2 the central server assembly 52 is preferably, configured to act  
3 as a hub for the effective, interactive, managed communication  
4 of messaging traffic, as will be described, and moreover, to  
5 interact with the communication shell 60 associated with the  
6 messaging traffic, such as for the purpose of displaying  
7 promotional materials in conjunction with messaging traffic.  
8 For example, a promotional materials may be viewed as  
9 advertisements which may be displayed as part of the  
10 communication shell 60, as will be described, thus providing an  
11 auxiliary source of income in connection with the simultaneous  
12 and/or synchronized media delivery. As a result, the central  
13 server assembly 52 is structured to regulate, control and direct  
14 the delivery of promotional materials in connection with a play  
15 back control of the media players 15, 15' and/or the messaging  
16 activity of the media players 15, 15', the availability for the  
17 delivery being provided in exchange for the service of making  
18 available and/or managing the simultaneous media delivery and/or  
19 messaging. Of course, a paid or free service could be provided  
20 to users with or without additional promotional materials.

21 As indicated, the present invention also preferably  
22 includes a messaging assembly, generally 40. In particular, the  
23 messaging assembly 40 is configured so as to allow effective  
24 communication between users of the various media players 15, 15'  
25 and/or operators of the remote computer processor 18. The



1 messaging assembly 40, which may be manipulated and/or  
2 controlled through the central server assembly 52 or through a  
3 direct pier to pier communication, allows for the further  
4 enhancement of the simultaneous viewing experience by allowing  
5 the user of one particular media player to communicate with all  
6 or a select one or group of other users utilizing other remotely  
7 located media players. Furthermore, the messaging assembly 40  
8 is preferably configured to operate while the media content is  
9 being delivered to the user utilizing the media player, thus  
10 allowing a degree of real time interactivity between the media  
11 selection being presented and the various users.

12 The messaging assembly 40 of the present invention may be  
13 configured so as to provide audio messages, video messages,  
14 audio/video messages and/or text messages between the various  
15 users. In this regard, a messaging interface 44 is preferably  
16 provided. The messaging interface 44 preferably corresponds at  
17 least the type of interactive messaging communication that can  
18 be achieve utilizing a particular media player. As such, the  
19 messaging interface 44 may include a keyboard, mouse, video  
20 camera, pointer, remote control unit, voice recognition module,  
21 microphone and/or any other type of communication interface. As  
22 such, a message received at a corresponding media player at  
23 which it is delivered is communicated utilizing the connectivity  
24 assembly 30 to a select one, group or all other media players  
25 and/or remote computer processor(s) 18.

1           Although an audio only message may be provided whereby an  
2 audio message is communicated utilizing the normal audio  
3 facilities associated with media player, in a preferred  
4 embodiment wherein the media player communicates the media  
5 selection to a user utilizing an associate monitor 16, a  
6 communication shell 60, as illustrated in Figures 3 and 4 is  
7 preferably provided. Specifically, the communication shell 60  
8 is included and associated with the delivery of one or more  
9 messages to a corresponding user of a specific media player. In  
10 the illustrated embodiment the communication shell 60 includes  
11 a messaging display 62 which may be defined as a segregated or  
12 select area of the monitor 16 via which messaging communication  
13 is achieved. For example, the communication shell 60 may define  
14 a template area that overlies the appropriate media display  
15 section of the monitor 16, and/or may provide a segregated area  
16 of the monitor 16 for containment of the messaging display 62.  
17 Furthermore, if desired, the communication shell 60 may be  
18 defined so as to reserve an area of the monitor 16 display for  
19 when messaging communication is desired, however, remain  
20 substantially or generally un-obtrusive when messaging  
21 communication is not taking place. Also, appropriate movement  
22 and/or re-positioning of the messaging display may also be  
23 provided.

24           Looking first to the embodiment of Figure 3, the messaging  
25 display 62 may include a select area wherein a text message 63

1 may be viewed. This viewing of the text message 63 may be in  
2 the context of viewing a received message or of typing and/or  
3 entering in a text message by a user of the corresponding media  
4 player utilizing the messaging interface and then subsequently  
5 accepting the written text message 63 for effective  
6 communication to one or more other users. Alternately, however,  
7 the messaging display 62 of the communication shell 60 may  
8 include a video display 63' as in Figure 4. The video display  
9 63' is preferably utilized for video communication between the  
10 respective users such that users at various different locations  
11 utilizing different media players can see one another and can  
12 interact in a more face to face type manner. In such an  
13 embodiment, preferably an audio component will also be provided,  
14 such as a microphone which may be associated with a video camera  
15 or be distinct therefrom. Of course, if desired text messaging  
16 can be integrated with the video display 63', as well as other  
17 features including the use of special effects and/or animations  
18 so as to enhance a video representation of the user and/or to  
19 actually define the video representation of the user in cases  
20 where the users do not wish to be video taped. Accordingly, in  
21 such an embodiment person at remote locations, such as a  
22 grandparent and grandchild in different parts of the country can  
23 effectively watch a media selection together and can see one  
24 another watching the media selection and interact with one  
25 another as desired.

1 Looking further to the communication shell 60 associated  
2 with the messaging assembly 40, it is also preferred that  
3 promotional materials be deliverable utilizing the communication  
4 shell 60. In particular, the promotion materials 64, which may  
5 be included within the messaging display 62 and/or may be  
6 separated therefrom, are provided to a user who is viewing the  
7 media selection via the monitor 16 of the present system. Of  
8 course, the promotional material 64 can be any type of  
9 materials, whether associated with the specific media selection  
10 or whether completely separate therefrom and merely provided as  
11 a source of income relative to the facilitation of the  
12 connectivity between remote users. Furthermore, the promotional  
13 materials 64 may be tailored to specific users, if desired, or  
14 may be customized to change depending on the situation and/or  
15 the circumstance, or in accordance with the portion and/or  
16 section of the media selection being provided to the user.  
17 Additionally, if desired, the promotional material 64 may  
18 themselves define an interactive link which may be effectively  
19 selected by a user, such as utilizing a pointer control, so as  
20 to provide additional information regarding the promotional  
21 material 64 being displayed and/or by saving information for  
22 later viewing and/or later access.

23 In addition to or instead of providing one or more  
24 promotional materials 64 as interactive links, it is also  
25 recognized that interactive links may be effectively provided

1 within the messaging display 62 for various other purposes as  
2 well. For example, users may wish to communicate interactive  
3 links to associated computer website(s) or additional  
4 information and/or interactive links may be provided as  
5 selectable user responses to a query that may be presented  
6 between users or from operators of the master control assembly.  
7 For example, it may be desirable to poll users so as to get  
8 opinions regarding the media selection, as in the case of a  
9 premier or product presentation, or it may be desirable to  
10 provide a quiz to users, such as for an instructional use in the  
11 context of a test or in an entertainment aspect for purposes of  
12 winning prizes and/or for pure entertainment value. As a  
13 result, the communication shell 60 provides an interactive area  
14 within which the users can effectively interact while still  
15 effectively experiencing the media selection on the monitor 16  
16 and other appropriate media medium. Furthermore, the  
17 programming for the messaging assembly 40, including the  
18 communication shell 60, is preferably integrated into the media  
19 players 15, 15' themselves and as a result any media selection  
20 may be effectively utilized. Indeed, although as indicated it  
21 is preferred that the same media selection be simultaneously  
22 viewed on each of the various media players so as to provide a  
23 group type experience, it is also understood that the messaging  
24 facilities and communicative facilities in the present invention  
25 may also be effectively utilized even when different media

1 selections are being played on each corresponding media player.

2 Finally, in order to effectively delivered the media  
3 selection to all users in a simultaneous, synchronized fashion,  
4 synchronization data is preferably communicated at least to the  
5 master control assembly. This synchronization data may include  
6 a location designator associated with the media selection, such  
7 as a time code and/or track number of the media selection which  
8 identifies effectively what in the specific media selection is  
9 being displayed. Likewise, the synchronization data may include  
10 a title of a media selection and/or any other information that  
11 may be periodically polled and/or provided on a one time basis  
12 at the commencement of the programming.

13 Since many modifications, variations and changes in detail  
14 can be made to the described preferred embodiment of the  
15 invention, it is intended that all matters in the foregoing  
16 description and shown in the accompanying drawings be  
17 interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense. Thus,  
18 the scope of the invention should be determined by the appended  
19 claims and their legal equivalents. Furthermore, it is also  
20 recognized that a majority of the programming required to define  
21 the assemblies of the media player of the present system can be  
22 pre-programmed into the player's processor, encoded onto a chip  
23 or similar storage device for introduction into the player, or  
24 may be loaded per use or permanently onto the processor of a  
25 player, such as from a local or remote storage device.

1

Now that the invention has been described,